

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:

August 23, 2007/12:01 A.M.

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California Legislative Black Caucus Examines Poverty Conditions Among Predominately African American Private Security Officers

LBC Calls on Real Estate Industry to End Double Standard in Building Security

SACRAMENTO – Members of the state's Legislative Black Caucus urged the leading property owners of commercial real estate to end the double standard that keeps predominately African American private security officers in poverty conditions.

"Why is it that the mostly white operating engineers, the mostly Latino janitors and other service workers in these commercial high-rise buildings have full employer-paid family health care and wages they can raise their families on, but the predominately African American security workers must suffer these poverty conditions?" asked **Rev. Dr. Lewis E. Logan II**, Senior Pastor Bethel A.M.E. church of Los Angeles and a leader in the Stand for Security Coalition. "Security officers provide these wealthy building owners with service, not servitude."

Security officers protect building tenant's lives and public safety as well as multibillion dollar properties and yet they go home to our state's most impoverished communities from South Los Angeles to San Francisco's Tenderloin, West Oakland and South Sacramento. Some security officers work more than full time and also pick up one or two more jobs just to make ends meet.

"I work two jobs, and it's tough to work all the time and hardly ever see my kids, but like most security officers, that's what I have to do to get by," said **Michael Johnson**, one of several private security officers who met with members of the Legislative Black Caucus today in Sacramento.

A full-time security officer earns less than half the income necessary to live above poverty conditions as set forth by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Security officers would need to work nearly 100 hours a week to reach the self-sufficiency standard set by the EPI.

“The corporate real estate industry is encouraging dead-end jobs and is not meeting their responsibility to the officers who protect their property nor to California businesses and the public who deserve a stable, professional security force,” said **Assemblymember Mervyn Dymally**, LBC Chairman.

“Separate and Unequal: How Corporate Real Estate Can End Poverty Conditions in Building Security” a study specific to California, was released today by the Legislative Black Caucus. The study was prepared for the caucus by the Stand for Security Coalition of clergy, congregations, and community leaders.

“Real estate corporations should commit to turn these dead-end security jobs into good jobs for tens of thousands of predominately African American workers who comprise the security industry workforce,” said **Assembly Majority Leader Karen Bass**, LBC Vice-Chair. “The real estate industry’s double standard when it comes to security has a huge impact on our communities.”

If corporate real estate leaders would agree to pay security officers the same wages and benefits as the janitors it would bring an estimated tens of millions of dollars back into the state’s economically challenged neighborhoods and lift thousands of security officers and their families out of poverty.

“Security officers are the only workers in commercial real estate high-rise buildings without decent wages and access to quality, affordable health care – whereas building engineers, window washers, parking attendants, janitors and others receive full employer-paid family health care, career ladders and wages you can raise a family on,” said **Faith Culbreath**, President of SEIU SOULA Local 2006 representing 4,000 private security officers throughout Los Angeles County. SEIU represents nearly 10,000 security officers statewide. “Only the security workers – who are predominately African American – are being left behind.”

Members of the Legislative Black Caucus include Assemblymember Mervyn Dymally, Chairman; Assembly Majority Leader Karen Bass, Vice-Chair; Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas; Senator Edward Vincent; Assemblymember Wilmer Amina Carter; Assemblymember Mike Davis; Assemblymember Curren Price; Assemblymember Laura Richardson; and Assemblymember Sandre Swanson.

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